

Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways—RiPP

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Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways—RiPP is a 3-year, school-based, violence prevention program designed to provide students in middle and junior high schools with conflict resolution strategies and skills. The goal of the program is to promote nonviolence in the school setting by teaching students more effective ways of dealing with interpersonal conflicts than fighting, and by lowering the number of violent incidents in school settings. It combines classroom instruction in problem solving with opportunities for peer mediation.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In 1992, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) was awarded a cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to evaluate a violence prevention program already in use in the Richmond Public Schools. The results from this evaluation led to the creation of a new violence prevention program—RiPP. Program research and revisions continued, and the program was disseminated to a different intended population in central Florida. The program has been used in Richmond, VA; central Florida; and Passaic, NJ. Copies of articles and evaluation studies are available from Prevention Opportunities, LLC.

RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

Effective Program: Safe and Drug Free Schools, U.S. Department of Education

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)

UNIVERSAL

The program was developed for universal audiences.



INTERVENTION TYPE

SCHOOL-BASED

CONTENT FOCUS

AGGRESSIVE/ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR, SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, VIOLENCE, DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS ANY SUBSTANCES

The program targets risk factors for substance use and abuse, such as impulsive behavior and favorable attitudes toward violence and school violence.

INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN

INDIVIDUAL, PEER, SCHOOL

INDIVIDUAL

- Training in norms and expectations for nonviolent conflict resolution and positive achievement
- Developing self-management skills

PEER

- Peer mediation training and practice

SCHOOL

- In-school curriculum in violence prevention
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KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES

IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA, PEER LEADERSHIP, COUNSELING OR SUPPORT, SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Delivered over 3 years, RiPP combines a classroom curriculum of social/cognitive problem solving with real-life skill-building opportunities in peer mediation. Students learn to apply critical thinking skills and personal management strategies to personal health and well-being issues. The program is typically taught during the academic subjects of social studies, health, and/or science. The standardized curricula manuals provide content information, specific activities, sample lectures, detailed directions, and instructional resources to assist the facilitator. It uses both experiential learning strategies and guided discussions.

IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA

The RiPP-6 program for first year of middle school (sixth grade) or junior high school (seventh grade) is designed to let students know that they have choices when they find themselves in conflict situations. It focuses on the seven-step social/cognitive problem-solving model and features four prosocial options for preventing violence: resolve, avoid, ignore, and diffuse. It makes explicit the need for adolescents to think ahead about all types of situations that might lead to violence and consider options for preventing that violence.

The RiPP-7 program for second year of middle school (seventh grade) or junior high school (eighth grade) focuses on teaching the more complex skill of conflict resolution, particularly in the context of friendships. It especially addresses the skills of listening to others and communicating clearly. It also includes increased experiential activities to demonstrate concepts used in the curriculum, including some martial arts concepts.

The RiPP-8 program for the third year of middle school (eighth grade) or junior high school (ninth grade) focuses on making the transition to high school an opportunity for promoting nonviolence by facilitating positive risk-taking in youth. A new educational strategy, the Raccoon Circle, which builds on the symbolic meaning of the circle, is added.

PEER LEADERSHIP, COUNSELING OR SUPPORT

During the course of the curriculum the program provides opportunities for students to practice the skills of peer mediation, particularly with friends. Young people are trained to work in pairs to help students resolve their conflicts, using a specifically recommended technique.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The program focuses on skills related to problem solving and positive risk-taking.

HOW IT WORKS

RiPP employs a valued adult role model—a trained RiPP facilitator—who models prosocial attitudes and behaviors to teach students the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that promote schoolwide norms for nonviolence and positive risk-taking. The problem-solving model is the backbone for the entire curriculum; each session builds upon the previous ones, utilizing the entire model in a cumulative fashion. Typically taught during the academic subjects of social studies, health, and/or science, it is delivered during three academic grades:

Grade Six—the RiPP facilitator teaches the 25-lesson curriculum during 50-minute weekly sessions throughout the school year and supervises the peer mediation program.

Grades Seven and Eight—students receive twelve 50-minute lessons each year, taught by the same person during these grades. The peer mediation program continues, providing institutional support for the conflict resolution skills taught in all three curricula. The RiPP curriculum includes a variety of activities and techniques, including—

- Team-building activities
- Social/cognitive problem-solving
- Repetition and mental rehearsal
- Relaxation techniques
- Small group work
- Specific social skills for preventing violence
- Role plays
- Peer mediation

RiPP facilitators are required to attend a 5-day training session to learn how to implement the RiPP curriculum. This session is offered each summer by the staff of Prevention Opportunities, LLC. School districts can also arrange for training at their selected site. Reduced training fees are available to small school districts when additional teachers attend training within a 3-year time frame. Ongoing technical assistance and consultation are available by phone and e-mail.

Prevention Opportunities also has the capacity to assist with adapting the program for special situations (e.g., translating printed materials into additional languages) and consultation on the design and implementation of local program evaluations. Prevention Opportunities also provides peer mediation training, which is not included in the 5-day facilitator training required to teach the curriculum.

In addition to a detailed teacher's manual and student workbooks, *Promoting Nonviolence in Early Adolescence—Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways*, is available to provide detailed information on assessing school readiness, facilitator selection, program implementation, and cultural and community adaptations. All of these materials are available as part of the training. The book may be purchased separately from Plenum Publishers.

OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE, REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS, IMPROVEMENTS IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE

Decreased student-reported frequency of drug use.

REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

Decreased school disciplinary code violations for violent behaviors.

Decreased student-reported frequency of violent behavior and fight-related injuries.

Decreased peer pressure to use drugs.

IMPROVEMENTS IN POSITIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

Increased prosocial attitudes and peer support for positive behavior.

Increased use of violence prevention resources.

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

Increased student and staff reports of improved quality of school life.

Increased use of peer mediation programs.

Greater knowledge of effective problem solving skills.

Fewer in-school suspensions.

Benefits

Develops norms and expectations for nonviolent conflict resolution and positive achievement

Provides adult and peer models for conflict resolution and positive achievement

Diminishes stereotypes, beliefs, attributions, and cognitive scripts that support violence

Enlarges skills repertoire for nonviolent conflict resolution and positive achievement

Promotes self-management through repeated use of problem-solving models

Enlarges participants' ability to identify the optimal violence prevention strategy within a given situation and existing personal skills and values

EVALUATION DESIGN

Three published studies have examined the effectiveness of RiPP. The first study evaluated sixth grade RiPP at three urban middle schools serving predominantly African American students. Classes were randomly assigned to intervention (n=321) or no-intervention control group (n=305). Self-report and school disciplinary data were collected at pretest, posttest, 6-month, and 1-year followup. In the second study, RiPP was evaluated in an ethnically diverse rural school using pretest, posttest, and 1-year followup self-report data of randomly assigned sixth grade students. Pretest data were collected from 96 students in the intervention group and 108 students in the control group. The third study evaluated sixth and seventh grade RiPP using a between-school design in an ethnically diverse rural setting to compare outcomes over 2 years between four intervention schools (n=655) and four control schools (n=685). Self-report measures were completed pretest (the beginning of sixth grade) and at four other time points, concluding in the fall of eighth grade.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

1–3 YEARS

Amount of time required to deliver the program and obtain documented outcomes:

The program is delivered over 3 years:

RiPP-6 is 25 sessions, 50 minutes in length, taught once a week.

RiPP-7 is 12 sessions, 50 minutes in length, taught once a week.

RiPP-8 is 12 sessions, 50 minutes in length, taught once a week during the second semester.

INTENDED SETTING

RURAL, URBAN, SUBURBAN

The program was developed for an urban setting (Richmond, VA) and is also being implemented in Passaic, NJ. It has been used in a rural setting in four counties in central Florida and currently is being implemented in suburban Henrico County, VA.

FIDELITY

Components that must be included in order to achieve the same outcomes cited by the developer:

There must be a strong commitment from the school to preventing violence, to providing core staff as advocates for the program, and for incorporating the program throughout the school year.

The program must have a qualified, full-time violence prevention facilitator for each school, who is adequately trained in RiPP and peer mediation, and who teaches the in-school curriculum and runs the peer mediation program.

The implementation of the program must include an evaluation component.

Optional components or strategies and how they were determined to be optional:

If the user finds it difficult to employ a full-time violence prevention facilitator, it might be possible to use adequately trained and committed academic teachers or health instructors to implement the program.

If the school cannot handle such an intensive 3-year program, it is possible to implement RiPP-6 or RiPP-7 by itself and phase in the entire program over a longer period of time.

BARRIERS AND PROBLEMS

Summarize key barriers and problems associated with the use of this Model Program and potential solutions:

Problem: Attempting to implement the full program in an already overloaded school that cannot absorb such an intensive approach.

Solution: Introduce implementation of the individual years of the program over a period of time longer than 3 years.

Problem: Conducting too brief a program to be effective.

Solution: Make sure that the required number of weeks and lessons are taught.

Problem: Fitting the peer mediation component appropriately into the school's code of discipline.

Solution: The program facilitator must work closely with the school to incorporate the peer mediation component appropriately into the ongoing code of discipline.

PERSONNEL

FULL TIME, PAID

Types of positions needed to successfully implement this Model Program:

The program needs a full-time violence prevention facilitator.

Typical personnel problems encountered by users when implementing this Model Program and potential solutions:

Problem: Failure to use adequately trained facilitators and to provide adequate training to the school staff.

Solution: Make certain that the facilitators receive the full complement of training activities and provide training to school staff.

Problem: Choosing teachers on the basis of those who are free to teach the course.

Solution: Choose facilitators who have a strong commitment to the program.

Problem: Using inappropriate strategies such as scare tactics or informational strategies only.

Solution: Carefully follow the strategies used in the structured curricula.

EDUCATION

UNDERGRADUATE, SPECIAL SKILLS

Education and qualifications of the personnel needed to successfully implement this Model Program:

The facilitator should have a bachelor's degree in human services or a related field; be committed to nonviolence and to serving as a role model to the students (i.e., be "a beacon of nonviolence"); have the capacity to work collaboratively with a team; and be properly trained in implementing and teaching the program.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

Type: SEMINAR/WORKSHOPS, CLASSROOM, WORKBOOK Location: ONSITE (user)/OFFSITE (developer or trainer location), Length: BASIC (5 days)

RiPP facilitators should attend a 5-day training session to learn how to implement the curriculum. It is offered each summer by the staff of Prevention Opportunities, LLC. School districts can also arrange for training on site.

Training components focus on the facilitator as a person and on the RiPP curriculum. Extensive feedback concerning the facilitators' presentation quality and skill level in implementing the curriculum is provided throughout.

Additional training on peer mediation can be done locally or at the VCU training site.

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Prevention Opportunities also has the capacity to assist with adapting the program for special situations (e.g., translating printed materials into additional languages) and consultation on the design and implementation of local program evaluations. Prevention Opportunities also provides peer mediation training, which is not included in the 5-day facilitator training required to teach the curriculum.

COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$1,001–\$5,000

Cost considerations for implementing this program as recommended by the developer:

BUDGET

The program should budget for a full-time violence prevention facilitator for each school at a salary that is similar to that of teaching staff with similar levels of education and experience. The facilitator should begin at least 1 month before the start of the school year.

TRAINING

A 5-day intensive training program for violence prevention facilitators is provided through trained staff of Prevention Opportunities, LLC, at the Life Skills Center at Virginia Commonwealth University, at a cost of approximately \$650 per participant, for one to two people. The training includes weekly consultation via e-mail during program startup and implementation as well as the instructor's manual. Reduced training fees of \$315 per person are available to small school districts when additional teachers attend training within a 3-year timeframe.

Peer mediation training conducted at the Life Skills Center is \$350 per participant for 3 days. (Peer mediation training need not be provided by Prevention Opportunities, LLC.)

Onsite training is \$6,100 for up to 20 participants, including curriculum, book, and posters.

Users must pay for travel and per diem costs for trainer, food for participants, and space.

Onsite peer mediation training is \$3,000 plus expenses.

MATERIALS

RiPP instructor manuals are \$45 each or \$85 for all three. These include:

Meyer, A. L., and Northup, W. (1997). *Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RiPP): A Violence Prevention Curriculum for Sixth Graders*

Meyer, A. L., and Northup, W. (1998). *Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RiPP): A Violence Prevention Booster for Seventh Graders*

Meyer, A. L., and Plybon, L. (1998). *Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RiPP): A Violence Prevention Booster for Eighth Graders*

In addition to a detailed teacher's manual and student workbooks, *Promoting Nonviolence in Early Adolescence—Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways*, is available to provide detailed information on assessing school readiness, facilitator selection, program implementation, and cultural and community adaptations. All of these materials are available as part of the training. The book may be purchased separately from Plenum Publishers.

Other resources

Meyer, A. L., Farrell, A. D., Northup, W. B., Kung, E. M., and Plybon, L. (2000). *Promoting Nonviolence in Early Adolescence: Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways*. Cost is \$27.50.

RiPP and SCIDDLE Posters are \$15 each.

Videos on the program are \$200 per set.

Numerous articles on the program and program evaluations are also available from the RiPP Web site.

INTENDED AGE GROUP

CHILDHOOD (5–11), EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14)

The program was developed for students in middle school (grades 6 to 8) and junior high school (grades 7 to 9).

INTENDED POPULATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC/LATINO, WHITE

The original program was delivered to a predominantly African American population. Subsequent implementations in a rural community and an additional urban community were delivered to ethnically diverse, multilingual populations, including a significant number of Hispanics/Latinos.

GENDER FOCUS

BOTH GENDERS

This program was used with both males and females.

REPLICATIONS

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

ADAPTATIONS

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

CONTACT INFORMATION

ABOUT THE DEVELOPERS

Aleta Lynn Meyer, Ph.D.
Wendy Bauers Northup, M.A.

Dr. Meyer has 17 years of experience collaboratively designing, implementing, evaluating, and replicating effective health promotion and prevention programs for early adolescents. The programs she has helped design focus on violence prevention, depression prevention, and cancer prevention in both rural and urban settings. She is assistant professor of psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University and currently is co-principal investigator on a multisite violence-prevention project funded by the CDC. Wendy Northup has been a teacher and community prevention program manager for 25 years. She has numerous certifications in conflict resolution and mediation and has worked as a program developer on several violence prevention programs. She has trained and consulted on a number of topics in violence and substance abuse prevention.

FOR PROGRAM INFORMATION, CONTACT

Aleta Meyer, Ph.D.

E-mail: ameyer@saturn.vcu.edu

Phone: (804) 828-0015

FOR TRAINING AND PROGRAM INFORMATION, CONTACT

Wendy Northup

E-mail: nor@co.henrico.va.us

Phone: (804) 798-1369

Web site: www.has.vcu.edu/RIPP